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Message Text

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72
ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SPC-03 PM-03 L-02 NEA-06 MBFR-04

SAJ-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PRS-01

USIA-04 DRC-01 ACDA-10 /071 W
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P R 261830Z SEP 73
FM USMISSION NATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1778
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USCINCEUR
USNMR SHAPE
CINCUSAFE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 4544

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS, 12-31-79
TAGS: PFOR, NATO, MCAP
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE REMOVAL OF AFCENT HEADQUARTERS FROM THE NETHER-
LANDS

SUMMARY: AT LUNCH SEPTEMBER 25, PERMREPS DISCUSSED POSSIBLE ANNOUNCEMENT AT AFCENT SEPTEMBER 28 THAT MATTER OF MOVING HEADQUARTERS OUT OF NETHERLANDS WAS UNDER STUDY IN NATO MILITARY CHANNELS. PERMREPS ALSO DISCUSSED IMPLICATIONS OF REMOVING AFCENT FROM THE NETHERLANDS GIVEN THE HISTORY OF NATO'S MOVE FROM FRANCE TO BENELUX. END SUMMARY.

1. AT PERMREPS LUNCH SEPTEMBER 25, NETHERLANDS CHARGE BUWALDA POINTED OUT THAT THERE WOULD VERY LIKELY BE A PRESS CONFERENCE AT AFCENT HEADQUARTERS ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, DURING THE CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY. HE SAID THAT RUMORS WERE RIFE IN THE NETHERLANDS THAT AFCENT HEADQUARTERS MIGHT MOVE FROM HOLLAND TO ANOTHER LOCATION. BUWALDA UNDERSTOOD THAT IF CONFIDENTIAL

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DUTCH CORRESPONDENTS QUESTION GENERAL BENNECKE OR GENERAL FERBER, HIS SUCCESSOR, THEY WOULD SAY THAT THERE WAS A STUDY IN PROGRESS WITH RESPECT TO THE POSSIBLE REMOVAL OF AFCENT HEADQUARTERS BUT THAT NO DECISION HAD

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BEEN TAKEN.

2. IN RESPONSE TO MCAULIFFE'S (U.S.) INQUIRY, BUWALDA EXPLAINED THAT THESE STUDIES ARE NOW IN PROGRESS IN THE NATO MILITARY COMMITTEE IN CONNECTION WITH THE EFFORT TO CONSOLIDATE 2-ATAF AND 4-ATAF HEADQUARTERS.

3. BELGIAN PERMREP DE STAERCKE EXPRESSED HIS DEEP CONCERN THAT A MATTER OF THIS SORT WHICH INVOLVED DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS HAD BEEN UNDERTAKEN BY THE NATO MILITARY WITHOUT HAVING SOUGHT ADVICE FROM THE NAC OR THE DPC. DE STAERCKE RECALLED THAT SHAPE AND NATO HEADQUARTERS HAD MOVED TO BELGIAM IN 1967 WITH THE CLEAR UNDERSTANDING THAT AFCENT WOULD BE LOCATED NEARBY IN THE NETHERLANDS. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE THOUGHT IT DESIRABLE FROM A DOMESTIC VIEW-POINT THAT ONE NATO HEADQUARTERS CONTINUE TO BE LOCATED IN THE NETHERLANDS SINCE THIS WOULD GIVE THE DUTCH PEOPLE A FEELING OF DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN ALLIANCE AFFAIRS; AND HE ADDED THAT THE POSSIBLE REMOVAL OF AFCENT TO A LOCATION IN THE FRG MIGHT OCCASION UNPLEASANT QUESTIONS IN THE BELGIAN PARLIAMENT.

4. UK PERMREP PECK SAID HE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT IF AFCENT WERE TO MOVE FROM BRUNSSUM, THE NETHERLANDS WOULD LOSE SEVEN MILLION POUNDS PER ANNUM IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE.

5. BUWALDA SAID THE GON HAS PLAYED NO ROLE IN ANY OF THESE DELIBERATIONS. AS HE UNDERSTOOD MATTERS, THERE IS NOW AN ATTEMPT TO CONSOLIDATE 2-ATAF AND 4-ATAF WITH THE RESULT THAT THE AIR COMMANDER FOR THE CENTRAL REGION WOULD THEN BECOME DEPUTY TO THE OVERALL COMMANDER FOR THE CENTRAL REGION, AND IT SEEMED MORE THAN LIKELY THAT THE DEPUTY WOULD BE RESIDENT AT RAMSTEIN IN GERMANY. THE NATO MILITARY COMMITTEE, HE EXPLAINED, SEEMED TO CONSIDER IT UNTHINKABLE THAT THE GROUND COMMANDER FOR THE CENTRAL REGION WOULD BE SITUATED IN BRUSNSSUM WHILE HIS DEPUTY WAS RESIDENT IN RAMSTEIN.

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6. CANADIAN PERMREP MENZIES INSISTED THAT THESE WERE MATTERS WHICH DO HAVE POLITICAL CONNOTATIONS AND WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE DPC EVEN WHILE MILITARY DISCUSSIONS WERE IN PROGRESS. DEPUTY SYG PANSA REMARKED THAT, IF GENERAL BENNECKE OR GENERAL FERBER REVEALS ON SEPTEMBER 28 THAT SUCH STUDIES ARE IN PROGRESS, THE POLITICAL DAMAGE WILL ALREADY HAVE BEEN DONE.
MCAULIFFE

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